

FORM B – BUILDING

10A 47

Georgetown

GEO.90

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town/City: Georgetown

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Elm Street Area

Address: 62 Elm Street

Historic Name: Charles & Sally P. Nelson House

Uses: Present: residence

Original: residence

Date of Construction: ca. 1840

Source: historic maps & family history

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: unknown, possibly housewrights
Joseph & John Kimball

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: asbestos cement shingles

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Barn/shop (non-historic)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

none

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.45 acre

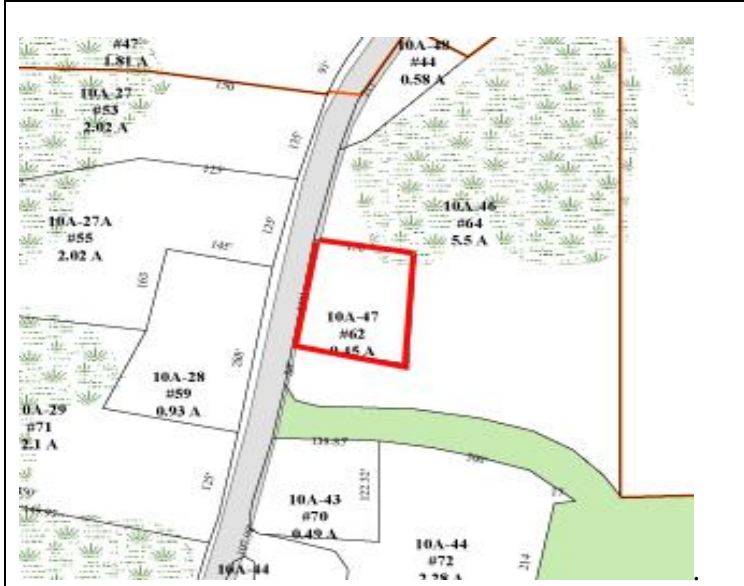
Setting: This house is set back from the east side of Elm Street on a slight rise and on a lot with mature hardwoods. The house is bordered by a stone wall on its front (west) façade. Elm Street is primarily residential.

Photograph



View from W

Locus Map



Recorded by: Kathryn Grover and Neil Larson

Organization: Georgetown Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): January 2010

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

62 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.90

☒ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

The Charles & Sally P. Nelson House is a two-story wood frame single dwelling with asbestos cement shingle siding and a gable roof. It is situated at the west or street side of a half-acre lot on the east side of Elm Street south of where Chestnut Street intersects. It is oriented to Elm Street and centered in a heavily wooded plot. The house is sited on a promontory above the road, a stone retaining wall distinguishes the roadside with a break in the center for stairs leading to the front entrance.

The form of the house is similar to others on the street that have one-room-deep plans with two brick chimneys on their rear walls, one each at the backs of rooms flanking a center hall. This was a popular plan for houses in towns along the North Shore of Massachusetts and in Portsmouth, New Hampshire during the period Elm Street developed. A map of the area published in 1838 does not depict the house, but it was built in that period, probably by Charles Nelson who cannot be clearly placed there until 1860. Its design and date of construction associates with other of its neighbors that are attributed to local housewrights Joseph and John Kimball, with one notable exception. Unlike the others in this group, the Nelson house does not have a projecting entrance, rather its trabeated architrave with sidelights is flush with the front wall. The house has a long two-story kitchen ell abutting the north side of the rear wall encasing the rear chimney on that end of the house in its roof. A (presumably) later wing of equivalent size abuts the south wall of the ell forming a small courtyard behind the house. The extent of dependencies suggests that shoemaking was taking place there.

The five-bay front façade has a center entrance with a massive entablature. Windows contain what appear to be original six-over-six sashes. The roofline is ornamented with a plain entablature with a tall frieze abutting the tops of second-story window heads. A two-story wood frame barn recently has been built just north of the house at street level. It is connected to the house by a latticed breezeway connecting to the basement entrance, which is nearly at grade.

The Charles & Sally P. Nelson House is a distinctive example of Greek Revival Period architecture in the town and evinces the single-pile rear chimney plan form characteristic of Essex County and the North Shore region. Built ca. 1840, the house is essentially intact and distinguished by an entablature with a bold frieze and an entrance with a trabeated architrave. It was probably built by housewrights Joseph and John Kimball, who also lived on Elm Street. It is a key contributing component of a historic district on Elm Street.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

According to local histories, aside from the road (now Massachusetts Route 133) connecting Georgetown to its parent Rowley to the east and Andover on the west, Elm Street is one of the oldest streets in Georgetown, having been opened to "public travel" about 1686.¹ At that time between ten and twenty families lived in what was known as Rowley second (or west) parish or New Rowley. Beginning in the 1650s Rowley proprietors began to make land grants in the town's western reaches; in 1666-67, the town laid out three thousand acres in the area and granted John Spofford the job of penning cattle "the young cattle of the towne" where they had "been herded this last yeare." Pen Brook is named for these pens, which stood west of Elm Street. In 1732 families in the area successfully petitioned to form the Second Church of Rowley (ultimately Georgetown's First

¹ See, for example, Benjamin F. Arrington, ed., *Municipal History of Essex County in Massachusetts* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1922), 146.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

62 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.90

Congregational Church) and built a second meetinghouse at the junction of Elm and East Main Streets in 1769. In 1838 the General Court of Massachusetts incorporated Georgetown, which embraced most of the second parish.²

By 1800, according to a map showing the town center at that time, various branches of the Nelson family owned large tracts embracing both sides of Elm and Chestnut Street and both sides of Main Street in this section. All of these branches descended from Thomas Nelson (1615-about 1648), who was among the twenty families who had come to the New World in the winter of 1638 with the Puritan cleric Ezekiel Rogers (1590-166). With Rogers most of these families settled at Rowley, incorporated in 1639.

The extent to which the Nelson lands reached southward is not clear from the 1800 village map, but it is probable that Aaron Nelson (1740-1804), who is shown on an 1800 village map as owning lands on the west side of Elm Street, owned land on the east side as well. Aaron Nelson was the great-grandson of the immigrant Thomas's son Philip Nelson (1636-91), and according to local historian Henry Mighill Nelson, Philip's son Joseph (1682-1744) was the "first of this name to settle in Georgetown."³ After Aaron Nelson's death his land appears to have been divided among his children, in particular Joseph (1769-1856) and Jonathan (1772-1852). The 1850 census indicates that of the two only Jonathan lived on Elm Street. However, both Joseph's son Charles (1803-74) and Jonathan's son Sylvanus (1803-82) owned land abutting this section of Elm Street.

The house at 62 Elm Street has the appearance of others in the neighborhood built around 1840, but no record of it appears on town maps before 1872 when it was occupied by Charles Nelson, the son of Joseph Nelson, the heir to Aaron Nelson's farm at 81 Elm Street. After Aaron Nelson's death Joseph's brother, Jonathan, and his son, Sylvanus, occupied the family homestead, with Joseph and Charles recorded as living elsewhere. The 1850 census places father and son in the same household, but in a list of names removed from other Elm Street residents. Because of this dislocation and the absence of map references, the early history of this house is not yet known.

Charles Nelson was born in Orange, New Hampshire in 1803, and in 1828, by then living in Georgetown, he married Sally P. Dole (born 1801), the daughter of Peabody and Lydia Dole. Sally Dole's brother Luke Lincoln Dole was the longtime owner of 43 Elm Street. In the 1860 census the couple is shown with their daughter Martha J. Nelson and three boarders, two of them shoemakers and the other a day laborer. By 1870 the Nelsons were clearly living on Elm Street, Charles working as a farmer and shown with an estate of \$2600, almost all of it in real property. By then he was a widower and lived with his daughter Martha, then twenty-seven years old, two boarders, and the small family of Martha Plumer.

In 1874 Charles Nelson died, and in 1877 Martha married the shoemaker Jeremiah N. Sawyer, born in Georgetown about 1837. The Sawyers appear to have lived at 62 Elm in 1880, but in the 1900 census Martha J. Sawyer, then fifty-eight (and according to the census not a widow) was boarding in the nearby home of Joshua How at 53 Elm. Who lived on the property between 1880 and 1914 is not yet known, but in the latter year William Nelson Poole, proprietor of the Georgetown and Haverhill Express Company, lived at and ran his business from this address. Poole was born in 1881 and was the son of the Rowley shoemaker William H. Poole. In 1902, when he married Alice M. Foote of Georgetown, Poole was working as a hostler but by 1910 was an expressman. His son Harold Nelson Poole lived at 35 Elm; another son, Kenneth Leslie Poole, lived in the 1930s at 12 Elm Street.

The Pooles remained at 62 Elm through about 1918, and by 1920 they had moved to 42 Elm Street. In that year the single shoemaker Peter T. Durant, the widow Jane Lally, and the mason Joseph A. McDougall and his wife Catherine occupied the 62 Elm Street house. Durant, a shoe factory heeler, and McDougall, then a laborer for the town, were still at this address in 1933. Both had moved by the time they registered for the draft in 1942. In 1945 Ann Raycroft Pedder of South Brookline, who had bought five parcels including this one in 1907 and lived at 33 Elm Street, owned the property and sold it to Joseph R. Hingston of Brookline. The property changed hands five times from that point to 1968, when John D. and Karen S. Rawson sold it to current owners Charles Margosian Jr.⁴

² Thomas Gage, *The History of Rowley* (Boston: Ferdinand Andrews, 1840), 31-32, 320, 324, 326, 329.

³ Henry M. Nelson, "Town of Georgetown History," in D. Hamilton Hurd, *History of Essex County, Massachusetts, with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men* (Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis and Co., 1888), 1: 812.

⁴ Catherine S. Parker to Anne Raycroft Pedden, 20 September 1907, SED 1891:189; Pedder to Joseph R. Hingston, 1945, SED 3470:26; John D. and Karen S. Rawson to Charles E. D. Margosian Jr. and Jo Anne R. Margosian, 22 August 1968, SED 5552:177.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

62 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.90

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MAPS

"Map of the Centre of Georgetown in 1800." In Perley, Sidney H., "Centre of Georgetown in the Year 1800." *The Essex Antiquarian: A Quarterly Magazine Devoted to the Biography, Genealogy, History, and Antiquities of Essex County, Massachusetts* 2, 7 (July 1898): 201.

Map of Georgetown in 1810 and 1840. In Gage, Thomas. *The History of Rowley, Anciently Including Bradford, Boxford, and Georgetown, from the Year 1639 to the Present Time*. Boston: F. Andrews, 1840. 320.

"Map of New Rowley Surveyed and Drawn by Philander Anderson 1830." Georgetown Historical Society.

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INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

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[Delete this page if no Criteria Statement is prepared]

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Individually eligible ☐ Eligible **only** in a historic district
☒ Contributing to a potential historic district ☐ Potential historic district

Criteria: ☒ **A** ☐ **B** ☒ **C** ☐ **D**

Criteria Considerations: ☐ **A** ☐ **B** ☐ **C** ☐ **D** ☐ **E** ☐ **F** ☐ **G**

Statement of Significance by _____ Neil Larson and Kathryn Grover _____
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The Charles & Sally P. Nelson House is a distinctive example of Greek Revival Period architecture in the town and evinces the single-pile rear chimney plan form characteristic of Essex County and the North Shore region. Built ca. 1840, the house is essentially intact and distinguished by an entablature with a bold frieze and an entrance with a trabeated architrave. It was probably built by housewrights Joseph and John Kimball, who also lived on Elm Street. It is a key contributing component of a historic district on Elm Street.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

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Area(s) Form No.

	GEO.90
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View from NW



View from NW

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

62 ELM STREET

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220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	GEO.90
--	--------



View from SW



View from SE

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

62 ELM STREET

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220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	GEO.90
--	--------



View from SE



Aerial view from W